

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00

STR-04 TRSE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3202

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FOR ROUSE EUR/CAN

PASS AGRIC FOR ANDERSON, G.WHITE/FAS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CA

SUBJECT: STATUS OF PBB CERTIFICATION PROPOSAL FOR MICHIGAN
CATTLE

REF: TELCOMS FROM RIESZ/USDA AND BLAKEMORE/STATE

1. AGATT WAS ALERTED BY REF TELCOMS OF PLANS BY MICHIGAN
DIR AG BALL TO SCHEDULE MEETING WITH MINAG WHELAN AND A/C
MEAT INSPECTION AUTHORITIES. SUBSEQUENTLY AGATT WAS
ADVISED USDA HAD AGREED TO ARRANGE MEETING AND AGATT WAS
INSTRUCTED FOLLOW UP AND CONFIRM DATES OF APRIL 27 OR 28,
WHICH IT WAS THOUGHT HAD ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED BY MICHIGAN
CONTACTS WITH WHELAN.

2. PRESUMABLY MICHIGAN CONTACTS MADE WITH WHELAN'S DISTRICT
OFFICE IN WINDSOR DURING EASTER RECESS OF PARLIAMENT.
HOWEVER, A/C ADVISES AGATT NO RPT NO TIME SET ASIDE ON
MINISTER'S SCHEDULE FOR MICHIGAN MEETING AND SCHEDULE NOW
FULL ON SUGGESTED DATES.

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3. AGATT UNDERSTANDS THAT USDA DESIRES EMBASSY TAKE
INITIATIVE TO SET UP MEETING WITH GOC OFFICIALS, IN WHICH
MICHIGAN REPS WOULD PARTICIPATE, TO ASCERTAIN STATUS A/C
CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED PBB CERTIFICATION SYSTEM. BEFORE
REQUESTING SUCH MEETING AGATT WISHES RECAP CURRENT STATUS
AND OFFER SUGGESTIONS:

(A) A/C HAS NOT GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO PROPOSAL BECAUSE PUBLIC REACTION IS QUITE HOSTILE. MIN WHELAN REPORTEDLY RECEIVING MANY LETTERS FROM ALL PARTS OF CANADA OBJECTING TO IMPORTATION OF ALLEGED PBB CONTAMINATED CATTLE AND BEEF. HE HAS EVEN RECEIVED LETTERS FROM MICHIGAN URGING HE NOT PERMIT IMPORTS OF MICHIGAN CATTLE. WHILE THESE OBJECTIONS MAY NOT BE VALID IN LIGHT OF SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE, WHELAN BELIEVES THIS IS WRONG TIME TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL.

(B) A/C VIEW IS THAT IN LIGHT OF PUBLIC REACTION TO PBB ISSUE IN MICHIGAN THAT CANADA CANNOT AT THIS TIME SUBSTITUTE THE PROPOSED CERTIFICATION PLAN FOR ITS PRESENT PRACTICE OF TESTING CATTLE AND BEEF OF MICHIGAN ORIGIN FOR PBB RESIDUE.

(C) IN AGATT'S JUDGEMENT IF A/C IS PRESSED FOR DECISION NOW ON PROPOSED CERTIFICATION THE RESULT WILL BE NEGATIVE WHICH WOULD MAKE SUBSEQUENT RECONSIDERATION MORE DIFFICULT. A/C OFFICIALS PRIVATELY CONCUR.

(D) WHILE SYMPATHETIC TO MICHIGAN'S CONCERN ABOUT DEPRESSED CATTLE PRICES, AGATT DOES NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THAT ACCEPTANCE OF CERTIFICATION PROPOSAL WOULD OFFER ANY IMMEDIATE RELIEF. CATTLE AND BEEF MARKETS IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO HAVE BEEN WEAK FOR PAST SIX WEEKS.

(E) IF USDA DESIRES PBB CERTIFICATION ISSUE BE DISCUSSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON A USG/GOC BASIS, WITH PARTICIPATION MICHIGAN REPS, AGATT RECOMMENDS THIS BE DONE WITHOUT DIRECTLY INVOLVING MINISTER WHELAN AT THIS STAGE. MEETING COULD INVOLVE MEAT INSPECTION OFFICIALS AND SENIOR ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER. TO EXTENT A/C OFFICIALS ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE AT ALL, AGATT HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THEY WILL REQUEST MORE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF FEDERAL APHIS IN CERTIFICATION THAN APPEARS IN CURRENT PROPOSAL. ENDERS

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